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## RESEARCH

## THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SOCIAL VISITING NURSE AS A MONITOR OF MENTAL HYGIENE (1927-1942)

A ATUAÇÃO DA ENFERMEIRA VISITADORA SOCIAL COMO MONITORA DE HIGIENE MENTAL (1927-1942)

LA ACTUACIÓN DE LA ENFERMERA VISITANTE SOCIAL COMO MONITORA DE HIGIENE MENTAL (1927-1942)

Ana Paula da Cunha<sup>1</sup>, Osnir Claudiano da Silva Junior<sup>2</sup>, Luana Christina Souza da Silva<sup>3</sup>

## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** To analyze the insertion of the social visiting nursing as monitors of mental hygiene in the assistance to psychopaths in the Distrito Federal and discuss the performance of the social visiting nursing as monitors of mental hygiene in the assistance to psychopaths in the Distrito Federal. **Methods:** Historical-social study, approach with the documentary analysis. **Results:** The Social Visiting was specialists nurses in the area of psychiatry. They were inserted in the assistance to psychopaths when substituted the monitors of mental hygiene, who was nurses graduates without specialization. The visiting nursing acted as monitors of mental hygiene when performed the visitation, orientation to the patients, family and assisting to the doctors. **Conclusion:** Although the expectations about their work, the no recognition of title was strategic to maintain them in low position in comparison to their title. **Descriptors:** History of Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing, Education.

## RESUMO

**Objetivos:** Analisar a inserção da Enfermeira Visitadora Social como monitora de higiene mental na Assistência aos Psicopatas do Distrito Federal e discutir a atuação da Enfermeira Visitadora Social como monitora de higiene mental na Assistência aos Psicopatas do Distrito Federal. **Método:** Estudo histórico-social com abordagem na análise documental. **Resultados:** As visitadoras sociais eram enfermeiras especialistas na área da psiquiatria, que foram inseridas na Assistência aos Psicopatas ao substituírem as monitoras de higiene mental, que eram enfermeiras diplomadas e não especialistas. As visitadoras atuavam como monitoras de higiene mental ao realizarem a visitação, orientação aos pacientes, familiares e no auxílio ao médico. **Conclusão:** Apesar das expectativas sobre seus trabalhos, o não reconhecimento nominal do título foi estratégico para mantê-las em posição inferior ao que havia sido conquistado com mais um ano de estudo e um novo título. **Descritores:** História da Enfermagem, Enfermagem Psiquiátrica, Educação.

## RESUMEN

**Objetivos:** Analizar la inserción de la enfermera visitante social como monitora de higiene mental en la Asistencia a los Psicópatas del Distrito Federal y discutir la actuación de la enfermera visitante social como monitora de higiene mental en la asistencia a los Psicópatas del Distrito Federal. **Métodos:** Estudio histórico-social basada en la análisis documental. **Resultados:** Las visitantes sociales eran enfermeras especializadas en la área de psiquiatria, que fueron inseridas en la asistencia a los Psicópatas cuando substituyeron las monitoras de higiene mental, que eran enfermeras diplomadas y sin especialización. Las visitantes sociales atuaban como mentoras de higiene mental cuando realizaban la visitación, orientación a los pacientes, la familia y ayudando al médico. **Conclusiones:** Apesar de las expectativas de sus trabajos, el desconocimiento nominal del título fue estratégico para mantenerlas em una posición desfavorecida em relación a la conquistada com la formación. **Descriptores:** Historia de la Enfermería, Enfermería Psiquiátrica, Educación.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study has as its object of investigation the performance of the Visiting Nurse Social monitors as mental hygiene in the Psychos assistance of the Federal District. The temporal boundaries begins in 1927, which occurred the creation of Course Visiting Social and ended in 1942 with the completion of the last class of Visiting Nurses Association.

The course took place in Social Visiting Nurses Professional School Nurses and Nurses (PSN). The school was established in 1890, attached to the National Asylum for the Insane (HNA) in order to remedy the shortage of manpower due to departure of the Sisters of Charity of the institution. Since its inception the school was under the jurisdiction of psychiatrists and throughout its history configured as field accomplishments of the propositions of psychiatrists.<sup>1</sup>

One of the embodiments of the concerns of psychiatrists in EPEE occurred through Executive Order No. 1 of Sept. 1, 1921, which reorganized the school into three sections, the mixed feminine and masculine, being a female allocated in the Colony of Psychopaths of Engenho de Dentro.<sup>2</sup>

Decree 17805 of 23 May 1927 approved the regulation for implementation of the Psychopaths assistance services in the Federal District, in addition to performing the second reform in the PSN, this being reorganized into only two sections, the mixed and women. By this Decree also occurred creating the Course Visiting Nurses Association. The same was exclusive to women who had earned a diploma in nursing, which were chosen from the best possible education, character education and moral psychological and social.<sup>3</sup>

This course was a form of "specialization", targeted for assistance to psychopaths and had duration of 1 year with specific areas of the J. res.: fundam. care. online 2013. jul./set. 5(3):318-327

psychiatrists in charge of Relief and Psychopaths. Over the 15 years of operation, 102 nurses were titrated as visiting social.

The historical period in which it occurred creating the course, the 1920s, has seen big changes in psychiatry. Right now we adopted the principles of mental hygiene and eugenics by psychiatrists, aiming to prevent mental illness. With regard to nursing, it was necessary to train professionals who come to work in this new perspective, requiring the existence of the school under the domain of psychiatry.

It is noteworthy that despite these nurses have been formed under the name of social Visiting these were recognized by the services who acted as monitors of mental hygiene.<sup>4</sup>

The types of action Social Visiting Nurses were described by heads of services in which they were entered, i.e., mostly psychiatrists. Thus, this research raises the question: how was the insertion of the Visiting Nurse Social monitors as mental hygiene assistance in the Federal District Psychopaths? The objectives of the study are: to analyze the insertion of the Visiting Nurse Social monitors as mental hygiene assistance to Psychopaths in the Federal District and discuss the performance of the Visiting Nurse Social monitors as mental hygiene assistance to Psychopaths in the Federal District.

It is hoped that this study bring to the scientific community and other stakeholders nursing knowledge about the existence of the course of social and health visitors contribute new studies on the history of professionalization in nursing, particularly in the area of mental health. Furthermore, this research shows is important for clarifying a moment of Brazilian Nursing History understudied, since the existence of this course was only appointed in the other investigations in which it was mentioned, according to a survey in electronic databases in the exploratory phase of this research. Furthermore, the study allows to

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see a bit of the relationships between nursing in the 1920s with the hygienist movement, eugenics and preventive psychiatry.

METHODOLOGY

This is a study developed from the perspective of social history with the documentary analysis approach. The story talks about the social behavior of a particular social group, highlighting the organization, analyzing the modes and mechanisms of social structure, social classes and the processes of social change. Intrinsically analyzes the cutouts in society it, namely, social history is directed to a cell which can be a social group.<sup>5</sup>

It is understood by documentary study document analysis that encompasses a complex process, understood by using a vestige of the past to occur decryption of a message being transmitted code transformation due to the trace on paper, just a historical source. This type of study has as steps the location pointed analysis and interpretation of documents.<sup>6</sup>

The sources who composed the documentary corpus were: Annals of the Colony Psychopathas 1928 and 1929 and the Annals Assistance Psychopaths, 1941, available at the Library of Biomedical Sciences at the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation - Rio de Janeiro; Facsimile of The Annals Nursing 1933, published in the Anna Nery School - Journal of Nursing: the Official Gazettes of the Union, available online at the Brazilian Ministry of Justice, and the book titled JusBrasil issuance of certificates deposited in the Archive Sector Nurse Maria de Castro Pamphiro of the School of Nursing Alfredo Pinto from the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro.

For the analysis of the documents was necessary to construct an analysis matrix composed of the following information: year, author, document and action as the visiting

monitors social mental hygiene. The analysis was supported by theses, dissertations and scientific articles accustomed to the object under study, in print and electronic versions.

In direct quotes used throughout the study, considered the original spelling of the season.

Note that this study meets the Guidelines and Standards for Research Involving Human Subjects of Resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the sources of the study, Law No. 9610 of February 19, 1998, which has about copyright law was respected, because the documents that formed the corpus are not in the period of protection of property rights since date back more than seventy years.<sup>8</sup>

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Hygienism, Eugenia and new preventive psychiatry: the insertion of the Visiting Nurse Social monitors as mental hygiene assistance to Psychopaths in the Federal District.**

The Brazilian psychiatry has undergone a major shift in scientific guidance and assistance in the early twentieth century. Without abandoning the madhouse as therapy, began the extension of psychiatry to other institutions or bodies of society, such as schools, families, military, and these relate to the problem of mental alienation.<sup>9</sup>

In 1923 was created the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene (LBHM) by psychiatrist Gustavo Riedel, with the initial goal of improving care for the mentally ill through the renewal of the body of professionals and psychiatric services. However, with the passage of time, the League began to develop projects other than those proposed a priori. These new proposals aimed at prevention, eugenics and public education.<sup>10</sup>

The LBHM was a civil entity, recognized as an institution of public utility through Decree 4778 of September 27, 1923. This was located in the Colony of Psychopaths in Engenho de Dentro,

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which was the same location of the women's section of operation PSN, which reinforces the idea that this influenced the development of Brazilian psychiatry and eugenics.<sup>9</sup>

One way to operationalize the desired changes was the creation of Specialization in Social Visiting as part of implementation of knowledge in society and psychiatric intervention.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the Visiting Nurse Association, her performance should match the style of the time, which was structured on the principles of mental hygiene and eugenics. These two principles were intertwined when put into practice, despite having different definitions.

Eugenics was defined as the study of social factors that could control who could raise or lower the racial qualities of future generations, having a character both physically and mentally.<sup>10</sup> A mental hygiene control measures proposed society unfolding interventions in different areas and social segments such as home, school, work, among others.<sup>11</sup>

After the creation of the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene, psychiatrists were not limited to established by the institution and began to announce their new concepts of prevention, employed as a therapeutic action applied in the previous pathology. Thus, the target care of psychiatrists became the individual without pathologies and prevention was installed as the main form of action.

For implementation of this new form of attention, it was the intervention of professionals who directioned this approach. In 1924, a year after the creation of LBHM occurred monitors the insertion of mental hygiene in leaf Union personnel Thus it can be inferred that this work came to meet the need of extending the role of Psychiatry society beyond welfare institutions, being an agent who propagated the ideals of the movement. The name them as caregivers of J. res.: fundam. care. online 2013. jul./set. 5(3):318-327

mental hygiene also shows the incorporation of motion hygienist to work them.

The mental hygiene monitors only graduate nurses were also formed by the PSN. They did not have any preparation or differential titration. What distinguished the other nurses as caregivers was the nomenclature of mental hygiene.

From 1928, he began to occur gradually replacing the monitors mental hygiene by Visiting social, on an interim basis, as published in the Official Gazette:

"They were given six months' leave, without pay, to treat their interesesses the Cybelle Soares Leite, and Isaltina Santos and Cenilia Lopes Mendes, nurses Ambulatorium Rivadavia Corrêa da Colone of Psychopaths (Women), in Engenho de Dentro: the Benedicta del Masso, Maria Ramos de Oliveira, Antonietta Bowen and Cordeira Esther de Alencar, monitors of the same mental hygiene Ambulatorium. Were appointed to exercise temporarily the place of nurses: Lucia Pantoja Costa, Ismenia Gomes Carneiro Pinto and Paula de Campos Martins; and the monitors: Maria Geralda de Barros, Helena Buhler, Zelia Mattos and Maria Annita Albuquerque."<sup>13:19.213</sup>

It is noteworthy that of professional monitors that replaced the mental hygiene only Maria Geralda Barros had the title of visiting social, since he received his diploma in 1928. Nurses Helena Buhler and Maria Annita Albuquerque just received the title of visiting social in 1929. But exerted work as monitors of mental hygiene because nurses were formed by PSN, which shows that it was not required of the monitors expertise to pursue the monitoring activity. As for monitors Zelia Mattos, the same was not a student of the Course Visiting Social, having been formed only by PSN as a nurse.

In 1929 occurred the effective replacement of some mental hygiene monitors, who had no expertise, the newly formed social Visiting the PSN, as shown in the following fragment:

"By decree of the 8th of this month, were named (...)Maria Simeão Rodrigues, monitoring of mental hygiene; contracted the Ambulatory Rivadavia Correa, of

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Colônia de Psicopatas (Mulheres) em lugar de Irmã Esther de Alencar, exonerada na mesma data para aceitar nomeação para outro emprego.<sup>14:3.605</sup> Releases (...) Cybelli Soares Leite, Cenília Lopes Mendes and Isaltina Santos, nurses, and Benedicta Del Masso, Maria Ramos de Oliveira and Antonietta Bowen, monitors of mental hygiene at the Clinic of Cologne Psychopaths of Women, and named as such for contractadas places, charge respectively, Lucia Pantoja Costa, Ismênia Gomes Carneiro Pinto and Paula Campos Martins nurses, and Maria Annita de Albuquerque, Helena Bukler and Maria Geralda de Barros, monitors of mental hygiene.<sup>15:7.431</sup>

The monitors of mental hygiene Irmã Esther de Alencar was replaced by Maria Rodrigues Simeon, which was formed in 1928 as social visiting.

Nurses who succeeded the exonerated were the specialists, Maria Geralda de Barros, appointed as social visiting in 1928; Maria Annita de Albuquerque and Helena Bukler, who formed as social visiting in 1929.

In 1936, the adjustment to occur of staff and the salary of the civil service Civil Union, the six monitors of mental hygiene were identified: Visiting Nurses Social, and they and their formative years: Carmen de Jesus Jacques (1929), Carlota Tavares Santiago (1928), Laura Costa Mello (1930), Maria de Lourdes da Silva (1934), Maria Simeão Rodrigues (1928) and Regina Rosalina da Silva (1935).

The substitutions of mental hygiene monitors of the Visiting Nurses Social evident as was the inclusion of health visitors, which occurred shortly after the creation of the training course and the first class. This substitution shows the incorporation of the Visiting Nurses Social welfare and educational activities of the Colony, in accordance with the requirements of scientific LBHM.

Points, however, the fact that even after specialization course, doing justice to the new title, the specialists continued to be known and classified as mental hygiene monitors, position

previously occupied by the nurses not qualified as experts. Therefore, the inclusion of such social Visiting monitors of mental hygiene disqualified since they have replaced that previously worked under that name to be formed the first class of social Visiting.

If on one hand the insertion of visiting indicates the need for higher qualification to pursue the monitoring of mental hygiene, on the other, fails to recognize the non-appointment as Visiting nurses who were due to the expertise gained by this title. It is believed that this fact indicates the retention of nurses in inferior status to effectively conquered and adds the term mental hygiene, scientific and ideological mark of the season on the institution and the name of the nurses.

Thus it appears that the designation as monitors of mental hygiene was the influence it had on psychiatrists Professional School Nurses and Nurses from the creation of the same. With the emergence of the mental hygiene movement and eugenics and their influence on psychiatrists, the school was also the focus of changes geared to the aspirations of these new currents, since these agents also occupied important positions in the institution, such as the direction.

Moreover, the classification of mental hygiene as monitors misread qualification as Visiting social, since it was configured this title and distinction from other nurses. Nevertheless, do not use the title of visiting social formed by students at the expense of appointment as monitors of mental hygiene may have contributed to the extinction of the course, given that they were recognized by the state as monitors of mental hygiene.

The appointment of visiting nurses and social monitors of mental hygiene may have occurred as a strategy for the maintenance of psychiatrists nurses in a position of less prominence compared



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to what was expected for those who had studied one year more than the nurses just graduated.

### **The performance of the Visiting Social Nurse monitors as mental hygiene in the Psychos assistance of the Federal District**

The creation of the Visiting Nurses Course in Social EPEE gave up the position that the school was since its inception. The same was established under the jurisdiction of psychiatrists, being considered a tool to consolidate power medical-psychiatric society, the main locus of production and application of knowledge, the psychiatric hospital.

The course was created as a way to improve preparation for the Visiting social. It was hoped that this course with the profession of nurse hit better purpose in the midst of her collective, acting as an instrument of compensation order moral.<sup>16</sup> Somehow course also respond to criticism by some psychiatrists that school, despite efforts made so far, provided no specific preparation for psychiatry.

In the early twentieth century, the morality of health guidelines were introduced by the medical-hygienic way to monitor the development of the process of political and economic period, which was characterized by the formation of an urban economy-trade and the projection of a ruling elite with bourgeois ideals, which had as its purpose to the existence of a viable European social order and capitalist.

In this context, it was expected that the visitor would act as a social instrument of proposed actions hygienists and eugenic ideals. After completing the course, these nurses received the title of visiting social. Gustavo Riedel, psychiatrist, creator of outpatient Rivadavia Correa and the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene found that the services of the Psychiatric Clinic of Cologne where the specialists were active, were named as monitors of mental hygiene. These were part of an occupation known J. res.: fundam. care. online 2013. jul./set. 5(3):318-327

as social work, which was based on medical and philanthropic activity simultaneously being directed to the visitation practices aimed at understanding the social and moral patient and place in which they exercise their professional activities.

In the 1920's had not occurred the creation of social service as a profession. The first course of social service was created in Brazil in Rio de Janeiro in 1937, along the course of the School of Nursing Ana Neri, when it was incorporated into the University of Brazil as complementary educational institution. This course was designed to study the causes moral quest for radical cure of evil, preventing relapse; stimulate the earliest possible return to normal life and independent; cooperate in raising the standard of living material and moral, and, working in coordination with the charitable efforts of associations and establishments of aid to the needy.

Regarding the social service assistance to psychopaths, Gustavo Riedel described the service was run by psychiatrists aided by the doctor and six monitors visitor mental hygiene. They acted in the exercise of medical activity and philanthropic simultaneously, so browsing the psychopaths in treatment and their families in order to meet the social and moral patient, as well as your desktop. Moreover, those who longed to verify and attend treatment application in homes, complement the clinical observation of a psychiatrist to obtain accurate information on the organization's view of plug. The monitors mental hygiene should also seek suitable work to psychopaths compliance with professional skills and in case of inability to allocate in hospitals, colonies, nursing homes, among others.

In an article published in the Annals of Colonia Psychopaths by Alfredo Neves, chief of pediatrics at the Clinic Rivadavia Correa, the practice of visitation monitors drawn for mental hygiene, not only had the character education and

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proximity to assisted. This activity was also aimed to observe the environment in which these were inserted, family background and the resources thereof. Moreover, accompany patients to the query, providing them with explanations about the treatment indicated by *clínicos*.<sup>16</sup>

The training of these professionals was ruled social medical education, the curriculum is different from the training of nurses graduates only. Soon, it was hoped these a more deepened since held a course aimed at a specific area, psychiatry. This expectation can be confirmed by the speech of Alfredo Neves, chief of pediatrics at the Clinic Rivadavia Correa when he stated: "They leave, so the social specialists with a reserve of knowledge that recommend ace more elevated underlying functions in social esphera people. "

Although preparation distinct from other nurses, the mental hygiene monitors continued to be regarded as incidental to physicians.

"... and the course of visiting nurses, which teem in charge of cooperation with the physician in advertising and teaching good hygiene rules, wherever they are to apply; physician assistants are in the practice of preventive medicine."<sup>19:132</sup>

In addition to operating the monitor in mental hygiene visits, organizing records in outpatient clinics and in the colonies, Plínio Olinto<sup>20</sup>, psychiatrist and professor of PSN, also pointed out that the nurse became monitors performed only when the visitation. In operations in other sectors as these were called Nurse Mental Hygiene.

"The nurse of mental hygiene that brings the patient to the office of duly recorded psychiatric, assists and accompanies the examination will exit, providing you with the latest instructions on the medicine and regimen to follow, thus outlining the counselor of their functions which are defined in Function of Visiting. Here comes the monitors and that of mental hygiene. In practice nurse home becomes visiting. Visiting your patient or his family to monitor this less expansive, more discreet, more severe. Taking his notes to record family observes the environment in which the patient lives

and checks how far the coexistence will be favorable or detrimental. Provides instruction on mental hygiene. Seeks to capture the confidence of the patient and the people around you. Won't apply them any medicine unless the doctor for prescription. His visit should be short, without intimacy, keeping his feet and not accepting any favors. In practice, the hospital monitors back to being a nurse."<sup>20:164</sup>

Still in the design of Plínio Olinto, monitors the mental hygiene should disclose the precepts of mental hygiene during her performance. However, they were not that just stating the ideal as hygienists also should possess physical gifts, moral and intellectual, as good complexion, nice face, gestures and delicate ways to attract the sympathy of patients and their attendants, in a way, their physical presence and his behavior evidenced the eugenic ideal. The charge in relation to the characteristics of these professionals was a way of imposing moral predicates, since the mental hygiene was understood as the very moral.

It is noteworthy that for entering the Visiting Social Course, if required of candidates the best possible shape psychological, moral and social. This also confirms the influence of LBHM in course development.

The peculiarities of these requirements can be justified by the relationship between the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene and the State, which was associated with LBHM to put into practice their ideals. As seen above, the LBHM was a public institution and is recognized as such by the law creating it. Thus, it appears that the specialists have been formed by social in a school that was located in the same physical space LBHM and have replaced the professionals who preceded them, were acting as instruments of the state to impose the same interest of exercising certain form of power in the wake of the current scientific and moral in vogue.



This approach is a form of power to locate the infinitesimal mechanisms and techniques of power connection with the production of certain *saberes*<sup>16</sup>. So, as a way of exercising power in various aspects, the performance monitors as the visiting social mental hygiene longed intervene in society in various fields, and in the clinic or in visitation, expanding the presence of the state and medical science.

The knowledge that they possessed were made available to the authorities, in this case LBHM and state, for the control of individuals and communities as a way to rationalize the problems faced in practice government, presented by the population, such as health, hygiene, birth, races, among others.

Thus, the performance of the Visiting Nurse Social monitors as mental hygiene was influenced by the precepts of mental hygiene and eugenics when worked in visitation in the colonies and in the clinics in order to control the population through guidance for prevention, treatment, cure and rehabilitation.

CONCLUSION

Decree 17805 of May 23, 1927 reorganized assistance to psychopaths and created the Social Visiting Course. The same was exclusive to women who had achieved the diploma nurses, being chosen among the best in terms of education, character education and mental, moral and social.

The course in question aggregated to that graduation could succeed in the social visiting the title, which is a differential in relation to other nurses who were just graduated. However, in 1928 the specialists were included in social assistance to the Federal District Psychopaths as mental hygiene monitors to replace nurses with that name. It is noteworthy that the mental hygiene monitors worked since 1924 in the Federal District, and these nurses only graduates and unskilled.

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The Visiting Nurses worked in social care for psychopaths as monitors when performing mental hygiene visits, working in clinics, colonies, hospitals and home monitoring of patients. His activities consisted in observing the environment in which the assisted living where checked housing conditions and income and in monitoring patients. Regarding the activities performed in outpatient clinics, they realized the organization of patient records met.

In addition, the monitors were mental hygiene that classified patients as their capacity to exercise a profession, and they indicated the profession for patients according to these skills.

These professionals have articulated their practice to the precepts of mental hygiene and eugenics. They were instruments of dissemination of these ideals, and developed its activities with a focus on orientation, ie education as an instrument of prevention, treatment, cure and rehabilitation.

Despite the high expectations on the work of these women and the role they would play in their health care and even ideological and moral preached by LBHM and psychiatrists, not recognizing nominal title was a maintenance strategy of nurses in a position lower than what had been achieved with an additional year of study and a new title.

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